

180 toy companies call on President von der Leyen to close the online accountability gap

19 EBPC members among the signatories of an open letter urging the European Commission to act through the European Product Act

Brussels, 10 September 2026 - An open letter signed by 180 toy companies has been sent to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen today, calling for action against unsafe toys sold through online platforms. Nineteen EBPC members co-signed the letter, alongside 161 other world-leading toy manufacturers, from family-owned SMEs to internationally recognised brands.

The signatories set out a single, simple principle: a toy bought online should be just as safe as a toy bought in a local shop. Today, that is not always the case. This is a challenge faced by all consumers covering many products, not just toys.

The accountability gap

Europe has some of the strictest product safety rules in the world, and responsible companies invest heavily in safe materials, testing, labelling and compliance. But **where a seller is untraceable or established outside the European Union, no effective actor within the EU can be held accountable by market surveillance authorities**. The result, the letter argues, is a double failure: children are exposed to unsafe toys, while compliant European companies are forced to compete against businesses that bear none of the costs of compliance. The impact affects all reputable producers but falls hardest on SMEs, for whom testing, documentation and safety expertise represent a far larger share of resources.

Toy Industries of Europe's 2024 [mystery-shopping exercise](#) found that, of toys bought from third-party traders on seven major online marketplaces, 96% were non-compliant with EU rules and 80% were unsafe.

What the letter asks for

The signatories ask the Commission to establish one clear rule in the European Product Act: every toy sold to an EU consumer should have a clearly identifiable EU-established economic operator responsible for its compliance with European law. Where no such operator exists or can be identified, the online platform that chose to facilitate the sale should assume that responsibility.

The letter is explicit about what it does not ask for. Platforms would not be required to guarantee compliance for every product they list. Responsibility would fall to the platform only as a fallback, where no other accountable EU-based operator exists. If every seller already has a genuine EU-based operator, nothing changes for the platform.

The letter also recognises the Commission's work on customs modernisation, market surveillance and the Digital Product Passport, and the role of the Digital Services Act in addressing systemic risks on the largest platforms, but states that these measures stop short of addressing the accountability gap at the level of the individual product.

Why this matters for our sector

Balloons and other party products, some of which are within the scope of toy safety rules are widely sold on online platforms by sellers with no accountable EU-established operator behind them. EBPC members carry

the full cost of testing, labelling and warnings, and compete directly against products that carry none of it. The accountability gap is not an abstract policy problem for our members; it is a daily commercial reality.

Next steps

The European Commission is preparing its European Product Act proposal. EBPC will continue to work with Toy Industries of Europe and with members to press the case for effective accountability as the proposal moves into the legislative debate.

Suteesh Chumber, Director General of EBPC, said:

"Parents should be able to trust that a product sold online meets the same safety rules as one sold in a shop. Our members invest heavily in meeting European requirements. They should not have to compete with sellers who avoid those same rules and still reach European families. If a product is sold to a child in Europe, someone in Europe should be responsible for ensuring it complies with European law."

The full position is available [here](#).

For and on behalf of,

The European Balloon & Party Council

About EBPC

The European Balloon & Party Council (EBPC) is the leading European trade association representing manufacturers, distributors, and stakeholders within the balloon and celebration industry. EBPC works to promote product safety, responsible use, and high industry standards across Europe.

The organisation actively engages with EU institutions, regulators, and national authorities on legislative and environmental matters, while providing technical guidance and consumer education to support safe and responsible use of celebration products.